Clearance of customs prosecution cases

*131. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:
SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of a very large number of prosecution cases pertaining to customs duty evasion pending in various courts of law, Government propose to set up special courts in consultation with the State Governments with a view to clearing the cases expeditiously; and

(b) if so, what progress has been made in this direction so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) There is no proposal to set up special courts for economic offences exclusively for dealing with the customs duty evasion cases.

(b) Does not arise

Impact of new import/export policy

*132. SHRI N.E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that by permitting the import of copra, coconut oil, rubber, rubber products, clove, nutmeg, coir and coir products under OGL following the announcement of the new Import/Export Policy, there has been a decline in the prices of these cash crops to the detriment of the agricultural economy of the States;

(b) whether the State Governments have made any requests to the Central Government to withdraw permission for such imports; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI): (a) to (c) Under the Import and Export Policy for April 1988—March 1991, import of copra, coconut oil and natural rubber continues to be canalised as was in the earlier policy. There is no change in Import Policy for rubber products, coir and coir products. Only cloves and nutmeg have been shifted from the Canalised List to the Open General Licence List. No request has so far been received by the Government for withdrawal of permission for import of these items. At present there is no proposal for change in the import policy for these items.

Plan to prevent the spread of desert area

*133. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that ten States and the Union Territory of Delhi are likely to miss normal monsoons due to massive depletion of forests cover on the country's major mountains like the Himalayas, Aravalis and Western Ghats; if so, what steps Government propose to take check such deforestation;

(b) what steps are being taken to prevent the spread of natural arid zones in Thar Desert in Rajasthan and the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh;

(c) whether Government contemplate a special plan to prevent the spread of desert area in the above mentioned places; and

(d) if so, what are the details of such a special plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) There is no scientific evidence to establish that depletion of forest cover causes disturbance to normal monsoons.

(b) A number of measures such as afforestation, pasture development, shelter belts, sand-dune stabilisation and water conservation have been taken up under the Desert Development Programme, Drought Prone Area Programme, Integrated Rural Development Programme and Na-